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THE CONFLICT IN CANADA.

By ERASTUS WIMAN.

The struggle in Canada for Reciprocity with the United States is confusing. A general Parliamentary election is to be held within three weeks, and both Tories, who now control the Government, and the Liberals, who are now in opposition, are advocating Reciprocity. But there is a wide difference in the kind of Reciprocity that each advocates; and as the consequences that will flow from the victory of one or other of these parties will greatly affect the future of these United States, it is most important to clearly apprehend the points in the impending struggle.

First, then, the Tory party appear to want *partial* Reciprocity. They *appear* to want that boon from the United States at this moment, but their sincerity, even for partial Reciprocity, may well be doubted. For instance, when the present policy of high protection was adopted—commonly known as *the National Policy*—the fact was promulgated that as Reciprocity in Trade could not be had, the party would have Reciprocity in Tariffs. But once having launched into the tariff sea it is extremely hard to get ashore. Interests of vital character are

created by this twist in the taxation of things; production is encouraged and stimulated, and a reversal of policy means ruin to the party in power. This is especially so, if the party in power depends upon a corruption fund derived from the interests thus created and stimulated, for a practical partnership is made between the individuals who profit by taxation, and the Government that imposes it, of both of whom the people are the victims.

Such is the condition of things in Canada, and any change in policy looking to Reciprocity, even in natural products, is extremely inconsistent with the previous policy of the Government. It is inconsistent because, while the manufacturer gets all the benefit of taxation, the proposal is that the farmer shall have none at all. He appears to need it about as much as the manufacturer, and whether he needs it or not, he thinks he does. The changing character of soils on this continent, the exhaustion of lands, and, above all, the improvements in the means of communication, make it possible, and to some extent necessary, that even agricultural communities now largely exchange their products. Hence, prosperous agricultural States become large importers of farm products from other large agricultural communities, and the exchange is beneficial and profitable. So it is with Canada. She has become a very considerable consumer of many agricultural products produced in the West and South, which she cannot as profitably grow within her own borders. To admit corn, tobacco, pork, flour, and other articles free of duty, while taxing the farmer for the benefit of the manufacturer, is apparently unjust. If carried to its logical conclusion, protection must protect all classes, else it is legalized robbery of one class for the benefit of the other. So that Reciprocity in natural

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products, which involves the Canadian farmer in heavy taxation to the manufacturer, and permits his American competitor to undersell him in supplying the artisans who are employed, with the farmers' money, is so unjust that the most obtuse will see that there is no real sincerity in this movement.

But, while this in theory is true, in practice also the Tory party have been most pronounced in their hostility to Reciprocity. For instance, there was a clause in their first high tariff act enumerating certain articles of natural produce, which should be admitted into Canada free, whenever the United States declared them also free. Well, one of these articles was the blessed article of fruit. The United States *did* make fresh fruit free, and Canada, under the statutory offer, was compelled most reluctantly to follow suit. For a time under this freedom there was a perfect exchange of this gift of God, in which there is no visible sign of pauper labor. The magnificent apples of Ontario and Nova Scotia came in freely to cool the parched throats of the artisans of New York and New England; while equally, the early strawberries of the South, the oranges and bananas of Florida, found a ready market, and were in great demand in Canada. But this freedom was too much for the politician. The berries competed late in the season with the local berries, and the pressure was put on the Canadian government to tax fruit, which, to its disgrace, it did. So with seeds, trees and shrubs, of which there was an enormous exchange, one Rochester firm having no less than four hundred agents in Canada. One by one the articles included in the tariff offer for reciprocal exchange was taken off, until the whole list disappeared, and nothing that would bear taxation, but was taxed.

With such a record what sincerity is there in the demand now made by the Tory government for Reciprocity even in natural products? None whatever. The demand for partial Reciprocity with the United States by the Tory party, now seeking re-election in Canada, is for the purpose of confusing the electors and the people on this side of the border. Every one knows, who is at all familiar with the subject, that partial Reciprocity as between Canada and the United States is an impossibility. True, such an arrangement existed from 1855 to 1866, but it was repealed because it was unfair to the United States. If it was unfair in 1866, when manufactures were in their infancy, as compared with what they now are, how impossible would it be to renew such a treaty at the present moment, when the country has become the greatest manufacturing nation in the world. The need of a market for these manufactures is the basis of the demand for Reciprocity. Shut out the manufactures from the market proposed to be opened, and the demand for Reciprocity ceases completely and utterly. An exchange of natural products without let or hindrance would no doubt be a good thing; but it would be unjust to the manufacturers and to the farmers in the United States. The articles of natural products which Canada sends to this side are numerous, such as small fruits, vegetables, eggs, poultry, lambs, calves, potatoes, barley, oats, hay, horses, cattle, &c. Not one of these articles would go back in exchange, and if manufactured goods of the United States could not be sent in payment for them, money would have to be sent, and where money is sent there is no Reciprocity. True, coal, cotton, some flour, and some pork, would go back into Canada, but these would have no comparison with the coal that New England and the Pacific States

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would take from Nova Scotia on the Atlantic, and from British Columbia on the Pacific, for Canada is the only country that possesses coal on both oceans. Nor would these articles from the United States be at all comparable with the lumber, and especially with free ores that Canada would soon export to this free market in enormous quantities, for she is the richest mineral country in the world. There would, therefore, be no fairness in the proposal for part Reciprocity, or Reciprocity in natural, or even enumerated products, as proposed by the Tory party.

There is not the slightest disposition anywhere in the United States to encourage this kind of jug-handled Reciprocity. Indeed, there is such a singular and universal unanimity in this respect, that one feels like apologizing for discussing it at this length, except that the hopelessness of it shows the utter insincerity of the Tory party in proposing it. They are using the proposal to confuse the Canadian farmer, stealing the thunder of the Liberal party, and thereby hoping to win their reelection on false pretences. The struggle has been sprung upon the Canadian people suddenly, with only a brief period in which to decide, and this attempt to confuse and defraud the Liberals of their project is worthy of the tactics that the Tory party usually employ to carry their point. A few weeks will show whether a trick so disreputable will succeed or not. If it does succeed, it will be at terrible cost. For no favorable result in the shape of Reciprocity will follow; there will be grievous disappointment on the part of the Canadian farmer, who, instead of having a free market on this side of the border, will continue to be confronted, for years to come, with the severe exactions of the McKinley bill, which measure affects Canada more grievously, and more injuriously, than any

other country. The desperate condition of the Tories is shown in the tremendous risks they run, and at what cost they put off the day of reckoning.

Now, having set forth the peculiarities of partial Reciprocity, which the Tory party in Canada are insincerely proposing, it is proper to set forth the proposal of the Liberal party, viz., Unrestricted Reciprocity, which is nothing if not sincere. Unrestricted Reciprocity between the United States and Canada would be practically the same kind of Reciprocity that now exists between the States of the Union, and between the Provinces of the Dominion. There would be no taxation, no restriction, no let or hindrance to the freest and fullest exchange of everything each country produces, whether natural or manufactured. True, it is proposed to keep up the custom houses along the border, in order that smuggling from outside should not be permitted, and especially that Canada should not be the back door by which foreign goods could be brought into the United States free of duty. But the tariff of Canada must necessarily be as high as that of this country, against the outside world, for by the free admission of American goods (even now with a heavy duty, now half her imports), her revenues from customs would be so reduced that as against foreign goods the rates must continue fully as high as those in the United States. Indeed, the condition of equality of tariffs must always prevail, else there would be no safety for the revenues of either country.

But aside from this tariff, as against the rest of the world, there will, under Unrestricted Reciprocity, be to trade no impediment whatever on the whole continent of North America. Practically, the customs line that now cuts the continent in two will be lifted up, and placed

right around the continent. The result will be that commerce will be as free over the whole continent as it is now in either half of it, and that the beneficial influences which have flowed from the extension of the American system of protection over half the continent, will flow from its extension over the whole of it; while the benefits that have flowed from perfect free trade between the great commonwealths that make up the Union, will flow from a similar extension to proportions that will be continental in extent and continental in profit.

What one event in all events possible to occur to the United States could be so beneficial as this? It is difficult to enumerate any series of circumstances at all likely to happen, and so easily to be brought about, as would result from the obliteration of the barrier between the English speaking people who hold this continent in common. An enormous area would thereby be opened to development, which is now mostly silent, and dormant and dead. This development in wheat-producing force, for instance, has possibilities far greater than those of the United States. These areas can be filled by European immigration brought through the United States, who in turn would be customers consuming everything the United States and Canada have to sell. The wheat areas of the Northwest, beyond the Minnesota line, are one thousand miles square, and are capable of sustaining a population equal to that of the United States itself. Here is the great future granary of the world, and here for a century to come, without exhaustion, without fertilization, will the future food supply of this continent be found. Would it not be well that to this vast provision of Providence for the food of mankind, the United States should have an access, so that as it grows with a market afforded by

Mr. W. H. H.

the outlets of transportation, by enterprise and occupancy, the same relative advantages should flow to the manufacturing community of this country, as did come from the development of Wisconsin, of Minnesota, and the Northern and Western group of States. X

X So also in the vast fishing wealth of the Atlantic, and Hudson's Bay, and the Pacific (the latter with its three thousand miles of coast line), as in the great inland water stretches of Canada, which country comprises more than one-half the fresh water of the globe. The limitless timber forests, enormous deposits of iron, silver, copper, nickel, phosphates, asbestos, coal and other minerals, make the Northern, and Greater Half of the Continent, an asset of stupendous value to the United States, the development and growth of which, in connection with the Canadians themselves, would be more contributory to the wealth, progress, and prosperity of the American people than any other contribution possible from any other source. J

Strange it is, that within the next few weeks the question will be decided which policy shall prevail, for the time being. Whether the policy of isolation, of commercial hostility to the United States, of slow development, of poverty in Canada, and practical belligerency to the United States shall obtain, as illustrated by the Tory party, or whether, on the other hand, the policy of the Liberal party shall prevail, which means a commercial relation between the two countries, as intimate as it is possible to be—a policy that will include in its operation the settlement, at once, of every difference between the two people—the freedom of the fisheries, and all their possible privileges, the regulation of the transportation problem, the equality of American shipping in

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Canada's great canals and waterways, and, above all, the free admission to all the markets of the North for every article of manufacture produced in the United States now, and for all time.

Of course, some will say that Annexation would be a better plan to achieve these high results, and perhaps it would be, but Annexation is just now as impossible in Canada as partial Reciprocity is in the United States. Not in this generation by hostile tariffs, by practical isolation, by separate fiscal policies, will a closer political union be brought about. Those who study the subject closest, those who have the best and most numerous sources of information, and know most intimately the people of both sides of the border, believe that Annexation is now neither desirable nor possible. They further believe that to discuss it, to hope for it, to plot or plan for it, not only postpones it, but is a waste of time, a loss of opportunity, indefinitely deferring a relation between the two countries on the basis of an Unrestricted Reciprocity, of the highest advantage to both.

The most significant circumstance in the struggle now impending in Canada, is the desire to be free from fiscal domination on the part of Great Britain. The Tories set the example in their National Policy, in discriminating against British goods, in favor of Canadian manufactures, shutting out the former by a prohibitory tariff, and protecting the latter by severe class legislation. The Liberals now propose to push to its extreme limit, the liberty thus achieved by the Tories, and will agree, while still exacting a duty on British goods, to admit American manufactures into Canada free of duty. It is this discrimination against the mother country that so moves the Tory party, that they term those who advocate it, as

traitors and renegades, and the Loyalty cry is being worked for all it is worth as against the Liberals. The hollowness of a patriotism that will sacrifice the Canadian farmer for the Canadian manufacturer, that will in its turn sacrifice his interest for the benefit of the British manufacturer, is easily seen through.

The penalty of the geographical position of Canada is that the United States market is the nearest and best market. To enjoy the advantages of that nearest and best market, a market in return must be afforded. The price that the Canadian farmer, fisherman, miner, lumberman, and shipper must pay to the United States for the free admission into its magnificent preserve, is that an equally free admission must be afforded for all manufacturers, and all products of the United States, into the British possessions in North America. If the result is to shut out of those British possessions, comprising forty per cent. of the British Empire, the manufacturers of the British nation, the penalty must be submitted to, or the trade cannot be consummated.

After all, it is a conflict between two classes of Her Majesty's subjects. It is not a conflict of nations, or a question of loyalty or love for British institutions, or Her Gracious Majesty. The question at issue is: Shall the Canadian farmer and his fellow producers be sacrificed to the British manufacturer, as he has been sacrificed to his Canadian prototype by the Tory party—or shall he be free to do as he likes with his own, selling in the dearest, nearest and best of markets, buying in the cheapest, the most varied, and the likeliest market under the sun. This is the point to be decided, and the whole world may with interest watch the struggle that involves so much, that is so near at hand, and in which prejudice, ignorance, senti-

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ment, and political hypocrisy play so important a part on the one hand, and on the other so much of personal interest, greater development, broadened opportunity, and the future growth of half a continent is so concerned.

If prayers and anxious thoughts would accomplish anything; if urgency and importunity at the door of Congress for some sign of encouragement would achieve any result; if the good wishes of the vast mass of the American people would help to decide the verdict, the Tory party would be relegated to the shades of opposition, and the great Liberal party would stand forth as the sponsor for a new era in the history of this continent, "the last best gift of Providence to mankind".

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